

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03

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----- 128182

R 220845 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4308

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, TH, MY

SUBJECT: MALAYSIAN- THAI RELATIONS

SUMMARY. THAI AND MALAYSIAN PM' S MAY 21 OFFICIATED AT JOINT CEREMONY OPENING EAST COAST BORDER BRIDGE BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES. LOCATION MEETING OF TWO LEADERS AND INVITATION TO THAI PREMIER TO SPEND NIGHT IN KOTA BARU SIGNIFICANT IN TERMS GOM CONTINUING EFFORT ALLAY THAI SUSPICIONS OF MALAYSIAN COMPLICITY IN THAI MUSLIM SEPARATIST ACTIVITIES. END SUMMARY.

1. MALAYSIAN AND THAI PRIME MINISTERS MAY 21 OFFICIATED AT JOINT CEREMONY INAUGURATING BORDER BRIDGE CONNECTING EAST COASTS OF THAILAND AND MALAYSIA. RAZAK NOTED OCCASION AS " AN IMPORTANT AND HISTORICAL EVENT IN THE FIELD OF REGIONAL COOPERATION, IN COMMUNICATIONS AND FRIENDSHIP." HE SAID THAT BRIDGE WAS FIRST JOINT PROJECT BY TWO COUNTRIES OUTSIDE SECURITY AREA, AND HAD GREAT SIGNIFICANCE IN STRENGTHENING BILATERAL FRIENDSHIP. THAI PM THANOM ECHOED THESE SENTIMENTS, COMMENTING THAT THE " FRIENDSHIP" BRIDGE IS SYMBOLIC OF CLOSEITIES BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES.

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WM FOLLOWING CEREMONY PM PAZAK HOSTED THAI COUNTERPART FOR OVERNIGHT VISIT TO KOTA BARU, CAPITAL OF EAST COAST STATE OF KELANTAN, AND NEXT DAY RAZAK TRAVELED TO SONGKHLA AS GUEST OF THAIS.

3. COMMENT: ASIDE FROM ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF BRIDGE IN FACILITATING TRADE AND TRAVEL BETWEEN RELATIVELY POOR REGIONS OF TWO COUNTRIES, MEETING OF TWO PM' S, SMACK IN CENTER OF AREA OF THAI MUSLIM SEPARATIST ACTIVITY, IS CERTAINLY TO BE NOTED. BANGKOK' S SUSPICIONS OF GOM AND OTHER MALAYSIAN GROUPS' COMPICITY IN SEAPARATIST ACTIVITIES HAS LONG BEEN A CHRONIC SOURCE OF MISTRUST BETWEEN THE TWO NEIGHBORS, AND A REAL IMPEDIMENT TO EFFECTIVE JOINT SECURITY OPERATIONS AGAINST MALAYSIAN COUMMUNIST INSURGENTS IN BORDER REGION.

4. SINCE TAKING OFFICE RAZAK HAS ATTEMPTED TO ALLAY THAI SUSPICIONS OF GOM INVOLVEMENT WITH SEPARATISTS AND THE INVITATION TO THAI PREMIER TO SPEND THE NIGHT AT KOTA BARU, GENERALLY CONSIDERED THE FOCUS OF MALAYSIAN SUPPORT FOR THE SEPARATISTS, IS CERTAINLY ANOTHER SYMBOLIC EFFORT IN RAZAK' S CAMPAIGN TO LAY THAI SUSPICIONS TO REST.

5. EVENT SHOULD ALSO BE VIEWED IN CONTEXT OF VITAL IMPORTANCE GOM ATTACHES TO ITS ASEAN TIES.

CHESLAW

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